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Calendar		Planting operations		Trees	State of food stores
Europ.	*Native*	*Inland farms (incl. irrigated plots)*	*Marsh-land farms*		
October	7th month	Second yam harvest. Harvest of ground-beans, sweet potatoes, and cassava grown on separate plots.			New yam, from second harvest, for storage. New sweet potatoes and cassava.
November	8th month	Preparation of new yam-plots and planting of yam (may be postponed for 2 or 3 months). Second ground-nut harvest begins. Harvest of late millet.	Sowing of second maize crop.		Yam from first harvest finished. Sorghum giving out.
December	9th month	Harvest of sorghum. Picking of cotton and red pepper. Harvest of late beans.	Harvest of rice (late maturing crop).		Sorghum and late millet for storage.
January	10th month		Harvest of second maize crop.		
February	11th month	End of ground-nut harvest. Burning of farms. Some farmers prepare new yam plots now instead of 3 months earlier.		First mango crop begins, also harvest of locust-bean.	
March	12th month	Burning of farms goes on.			

Selection of Species and Varieties

Most of the crops enumerated in the chart occur in more than one variety. Yam is the only exception; although grown in a large number of different varieties in Southern Nigeria, it is known only in one variety among the Nupe, which is incidentally another proof that Nupe is not a 'real yam country'. Sorghum (*eyi*) was originally grown in Nupe in a number of varieties. I could collect names for three main sorghum varieties: *kiyi*, *dindórogi*, and *ekpā*. Of these three varieties *kiyi* has [386] disappeared almost completely, and *dindórogi* is fast disappearing. The latter variety was formerly specially valued for the black and red dye that was obtained from the stalk. The importation of European dyes has reduced considerably its importance, so that to-day *ekpā* is grown almost exclusively. *Ekpā* is also agreed to be the finest and best tasting of the three varieties; its survival thus appears to reflect a certain growing fastidiousness with regard to food, which may well have influenced market prices and demands, and thus indirectly the policy of the sorghum growers.

Two varieties of rice are grown: the 'sweet' rice, a six-months' crop, in the river marshes, and a variety which matures in ninety days, on the less well irrigated inland farms. Till six years ago only the native variety of maize was cultivated. To-day the American variety (brought from Europe), which is sweeter and has a softer husk, is more and more widely adopted by the natives. This new variety is easily recognized since it is grown as a separate crop, in separate ridges, while the indigenous variety is interplanted through millet and sorghum or yam. The two millet varieties, finally, bulrush and late millet, have been mentioned already.

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frequently the trees bore no fruit at all. But to some extent the failure of the experiment was due to psychological factors. The lack of interest in their trees which these novices in kola-nut planting still display reveals the lack of incentive for the adoption of this new, difficult, and lengthy enterprise, officially encouraged though it was. The adoption of the new cultivation ran counter to a century-old specialization and monopoly, to an organization of production which, firmly rooted in legends and religious practice, has come to be accepted by the people as part and parcel of that inert, unalterable, entity: their culture—a point to which we shall return.

Locust-bean Tree

This is one of the most important trees in Nupe. It grows both inside the town and in the open bush. Every part of its fruit is utilized. The pods (*elo*) are sold, in large basketfuls in the markets of Bida. Both the whole fruits and the empty skins are marketed. The infusion of the skins, a black sticky liquid (*longoro* in Nupe, *mdkuba* in Hausa), is used as dye for pottery, leather and woodwork, also as ink, and for staining and making ant-proof timber-rafters, walls, and floors; it gives them that neat polished appearance as if they had been treated with tar. A yellow powder found inside the pods (*elo nuwõ*) is used to sweeten milk, water, and other drinks. The fermented seeds (*elo kosũ*), pounded and kneaded into small flat cakes (*kula*), are sold on the markets; strongly tasting, and even more strongly smelling, they form an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking, being used to flavour practically every dish. The fruits of the locust-bean tree are plucked by the women, with the help of long poles which have a forked piece of wood, almost like a pair of shears, tied to the top.

Shea-nut Tree

No less important than the locust-bean tree, the shea-nut tree grows wild everywhere in the thin bush country. The picking of the fruits is again women's work. Small groups of women go out together, help each other, and eventually divide the fruits which they have gathered. The women rarely stray very far from roads and paths, and never into the uninhabited bush. The fruit, *ekó*, is either sold to the trading-companies or manufactured by the women themselves into shea-butter, an important fat in Nupe cooking, and an important commodity in the markets of the country. The shea-nuts intended for export are first dried in the sun or in the roast-ovens described above. Shea-butter (*emikote*) is prepared in the following fashion:

After having been dried thoroughly, the nuts are shelled by hand. As a rule this lengthy work is left for one day, and next morning the inner, finer skin is peeled off and the nuts are pounded in a mortar to a coarse-grained flour. Plenty of water is added, and the dough is kneaded with hands and feet for a whole day. In the evening the preparation is covered and left standing overnight. On the next day the dough is transferred into a big clay pot. A little water is added and the pot put on the fire, where it is left boiling for the whole day. During the boiling the pure fat comes to

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But as even the purest native-made soap can hardly compete with imported soap it is not surprising that soap-making is gradually disappearing, and has disappeared completely in Bida and the more progressive villages, such as Kutigi or Mokwa.

Indigo

Indigo, *eci*, is gained from two different plants, the indigo grass (*tsentse*) and the indigo tree (*eci* or *baba*). The grass grows wild in the thinned-out bush that surrounds most Nupe villages, but is also cultivated in some parts (e.g. Mokwa) and grown as a first crop before millet-sorghum.[1] The dye is gained from the decomposed grass which, after having been cut, is left lying in the open for from two to three months. The powder which is obtained by this method is mixed with ashes and placed in a sieve-like basket. Water is filtered through, and this gives the dye, which is allowed to drip directly into the deep clay-cemented dye-pits (called *marina*, as in Hausa). This technique of dyeing follows the Hausa fashion; and in Nupe as in Hausa the dyers, who also manufacture their own dye, are men.

The indigo tree is found scattered everywhere in the open bush, most densely in Trans-Kaduna. In the district between Kutigi and Sakpe we find even something like indigo-tree plantations which are tended by another group of 'tree-experts'. Here every village possesses large numbers of indigo trees, which are to some extent cultivated, i.e. cut and thinned out when necessary; they are not, however, planted or transplanted, but left to fertilize themselves. Among these indigo planters the making of indigo is men's work. But in the districts where indigo is gained from the scattered, wild-growing tree, the picking and preparing of indigo is done by women. The method of preparing the dye is in both cases the same; the leaves are pounded in a mortar, then left to ferment in water, mixed with ash, and finally rolled into balls. The finished product is used exclusively by the women dyers, that is, in a practice of dyeing in pots, and which appears to represent the original dyeing technique of Southern and Central Nigeria; according to Nupe tradition it was introduced into the country by the Konú weavers and dyers (see p. 188, n. 2).

Nupe country offers only a restricted market for indigo. The indigo manufactured by the wives of the Konú weavers, the total quantity of which is small, is either used by the women themselves or is sold in the markets—in the districts more than in Bida—where modern products have ousted almost completely the native technique of dyeing. The much larger output of indigo dye which is produced by the cultivators of the indigo tree is disposed of with the help of middlemen who trade it to Yoruba, the most favourable market for indigo, or is taken by the producers themselves to the nearest market of that country (Ilorin). This latter method secures the better price but may interfere with the normal agricultural activity. A family of farmers near Kutigi who

[1] This method of indigo cultivation is practised on a large scale by the Gbari.

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owned twenty-five indigo trees had to take their produce to Ilorin market just at the time of the second yam harvest. However, they preferred to sell indigo first and to postpone the digging out of yam for a month or two, although this meant losing the always profitable market for the first yams of the season. The element of economic calculation, to which we have already assigned its place in the planning of Nupe agriculture, reveals its efficacy in this new context as well.

Not much need be said about the other fruit-bearing trees. The fruit of the mango tree is eaten when and wherever it can be picked or gathered up from the ground; it is not traded—like the banana it is 'just fruit'. The tender young leaves of the baobab (*muci*) are used as food; they are pounded and sold in the markets as a vegetable which is added to soup and meat. In order to obtain the tender leaves the owner of the tree lops the big branches so as to make them sprout new leaves. The cotton-wool-like kapok which is contained in the capsules of the silk-cotton tree (*lembubu*) is traded in one or two markets of the country; it is bought by the Bida cushion-makers and also by the canoe-men on the Niger, who use its fine fibres to stop leaks in their canoes. The commercial use of this tree and its fruits has not yet penetrated into the more remote districts: while in Kutigi, on the main road, natives were collecting kapok to sell it to the Bida cushion-makers, I found in Sakpe, only ten miles away but right in the bush, the cotton-wool left unused, lying on the ground to be carried away by the wind. When I asked a number of men why they did not collect it and take it to the market—I could call upon a boy from Bida whom I had with me to bear out my contention that this stuff possessed commercial value—they replied, not wholly convinced, that it would be too hard work. Another example of rudimentary 'economic calculation', with leisure weighed against money-profit.

INNOVATIONS IN PRODUCTION

From this discussion an interesting question arises: why have the Nupe, who have mastered the cultivation of kola-nut and banana, not taken to the cultivation of other trees as well, but left most of their fruit-bearing trees to the 'care of God'. If you ask a Nupe farmer he will give you one of two answers: either the vague theological excuse that God has planted the trees, and that God will look after them; or the more rationalistic but no less acquiescent explanation: 'If I planted a tree I should never see its fruit, only my grandchildren would profit by it. Our grandfathers have not planted trees for us, why then should we plant for our grandchildren?' The fact, well known to everyone, that the Kusopa plant and cultivate trees is yet easily dismissed. This is one of the cultural features typical of certain tribal sections which are simply taken for granted by the other groups. The myth that explains how it came about that just this and no other sub-tribe happened to become kola-nut planters, the special magic which the members of that sub-tribe are believed to own provide the spiritual background for this attitude. This acceptance of an existing productive specialization as if it were a final and unalterable fact was effective enough, as we have seen,

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft.

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *koni* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d.* to 3*d.* per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *koni* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and

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maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages. Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

184 yams, where beans and other crops may also be sown. In Lanwa[5] yams and
241 guinea-corn are planted on the same plot in alternate years, but where the land is less exhausted yams and cotton may be planted together on the same plot. In Kakanda yams were hardly grown at all when Meek was writing (1917),[6] and guinea-corn was the staple.

241 Two types of millet—bulrush millet and "late" millet—are widely grown. Besides being staple crops, these are the only grains which may be used for ritual offerings. Cassava, introduced by the Hausa since 1910, is of minor importance and is grown during the dry season following the rice crop on irrigated land. Two varieties of rice are grown and practically all of it goes to the south as a cash crop. Onions are grown after rice in the river marshes.[7]

Within the settlements, house plots, often tended by old men, are cultivated, the main crops being green vegetables, beans, sorrel, red peppers, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, and hemp. Sugar-cane, rice, and bananas are grown on the strips of marsh running through Bida town.[8]

The Bataci and Kyedye sub-tribes, who are mainly canoe-men and fishermen, have more recently been paying greater attention to agriculture. They grow catch crops of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, and rice on their small marshland farms. There are generally two harvests each year, crops being planted as the Niger floods recede. Deep-water rice seed was asked for by a large number of Kede District inhabitants for cultivation when fishing was slack. Round Muregi rice has recently been introduced.[9]

251 Some crops (yams, sweet potatoes, etc.) are stored on the farm; others in homestead granaries (*edo*). Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed; bulrush millet may have to be dried in an oven before storing. Crops for export are not stored.

242 The Government established 17 mixed farms around Bida Emirate during 1937–40. Each was about 12 acres and was equipped initially with a plough and two bulls, and employed two labourers.[10]

245 The soil and climate are not, on the whole, conducive to successful tree cultivation, except in the forest area west of the Kaduna River, where considerable initiative has been shown in tree-planting. The only trees to be cultivated are the citrus and mango (recent introductions) and the banana. With the exception of the oil-palm and kola, the produce of all trees is collected by women. Kola-nuts are collected by men; the produce of the oil-palm is divided between the occupier of the land and the chief of the town. Trees growing on farms are left standing and not cut down.

The banana is cultivated only round Bida, Pategi, and Labozhi. Kola (*ebi*) is grown mainly by the Kusopa of Labozhi and its cultivation is a long and difficult process. The locust-bean grows well in the town and open bush and is one of the most important trees in Nupe. The skins of the bean are used for dye and for ink, the powder in the pods for sweetening, while the seeds are an indispensable ingredient of Nupe cooking. The shea-nut grows wild in thin bush country; it is picked by the women, who also extract the fat (shea-butter). Even remote hamlets have
[439] their shea-kilns and the shea-nut is the main cash crop, 75% being sold as dried nuts for export. It is little used locally, except for lamp-oil. The oil-palm grows
249 near watercourses and in the dense forest near Yeti. The extraction of the oil is women's work as is the manufacture of soap from the oil. The oil is most important in Nupe cooking but not in external exchange. Indigo grows wild but is occasionally
[439 386] cultivated in two forms, grass and tree. Men make and use dye from the grass and women that procured from the trees. It is traded to Yoruba.

[5] Davies, 1920.
[6] 1917.
[7] Nadel, 1942, pp. 205–7.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[10] Notes on Bida Emirate, 1936.

the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance, vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group may come from different families. There are no *efakó* arrangements. Such a band may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or companies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.[30]

Western crafts are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of income.[31]

Women's crafts

Pottery is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots. The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is prepared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.

Shea-butter manufacture is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are built by men.

Indigo-dyeing is practised only by a few *Kona* groups, where the men are weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa), who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.

Women's weaving is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia. Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rama* fibre.[32]

Weapons and tools include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks, and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.

Dug-out canoes are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained from Onitsha and the lower Benue.

Musical instruments include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some areas, bull-roarers and animal horns.

Gabi figures are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unprotected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.[33]

[30] Nadel, op cit., pp. 301–3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.
[31] Nadel, op cit., pp. 304–8.
[32] Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293–7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.
[33] Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 332; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 108; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

7: Nicholson U-5 (no date) 1934 FF52 Nupe FF52 Bida

(*k*) Various decorations—all incised or stamped—are added :—

(i) By rocking and advancing a mussel shell held in the right hand, a 'compressed chevron effect is produced (Fig. 4). The shell is 'rocked' on its rounded edge, and moved simultaneously in a direction at right angles to the plane of that edge.

(ii) A wide chevron is incised with the edge or point of a cowry shell (Fig. 5).

(iii) The sharp end of a (? snail) shell, the shape of a whelk shell, is used as a die to imprint a series of small holes or circles.

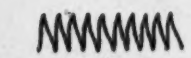

Fig. 4. COMPRESSED CHEVRON.

Fig. 5. WIDE CHEVRON.

(*l*) The pot is left to dry for 2 nights and 1 day (in the sun) and is then ready for firing. No wash is used before firing.

IV. *Firing of the Pot.*—A small circular kiln of mud is used, about 3 feet high, without a roof. There is an aperture at the bottom on one side for the insertion of fuel. On the inside of the kiln, above the top of the aperture, three or four protuberances are made in the mud wall, jutting out into the interior of the kiln. These act as brackets upon which a large crock rests.

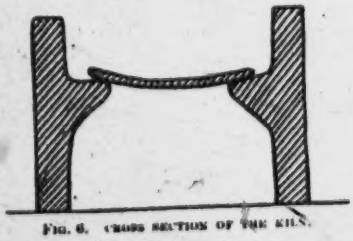

Fig. 6. CROSS SECTION OF THE KILN.

On the top of this crock the pots are piled and covered over with more crocks. A very small wood fire is lighted underneath. When the pots become black with smoke more wood is added, and the fire is allowed to burn fiercely for about an hour.

V. *Colouring of the Pot.*—

(i) Red.—If the pot is to be red it is now finished.

(ii) Brown.—In some cases a brown wash (I think of reddish earth) is used.

(iii) Black.—Some pots are blackened by the following process. Bark of the shea-nut tree is placed in a bowl of hot water, and then brought to the boil; pods of the locust-bean are added. In this decoction the pots are dipped while still hot from the firing; they are allowed to cool, placed in the ashes of the fire, and re-dipped when hot; the process is repeated about three times and the pot becomes finally almost coal-black.

The price of the finished product is about ½d. each. There are a few variations in style :—(i) Square shape instead of round. (ii) Number of handles varies. (iii) Larger sizes are made.

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